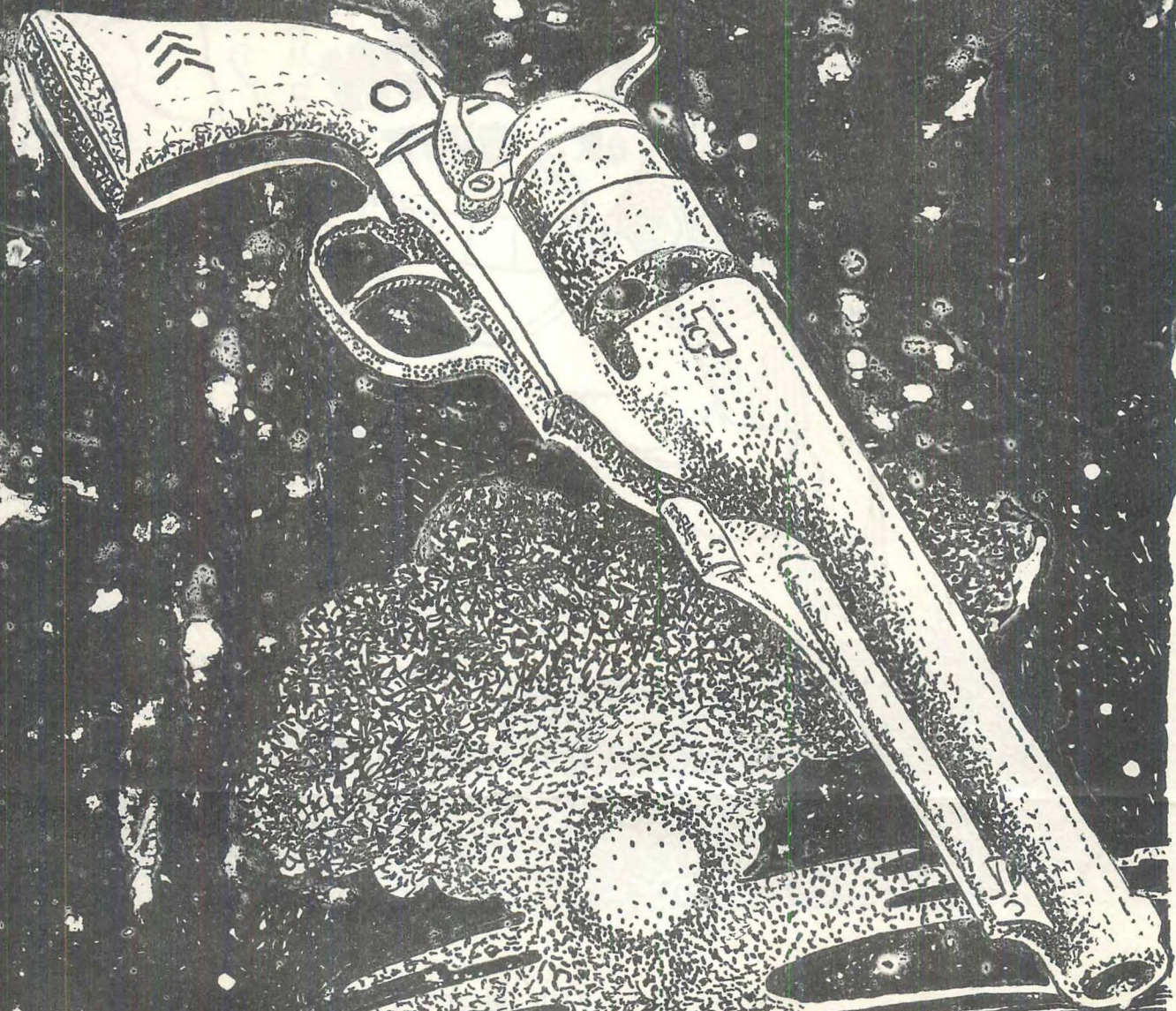


G2

WITH "BALLARD SPECIAL"



SEPT. 64



" -- Then it hits atmosphere ... the payload
ejects ... and he floats gently down in
Berkeley Square! "

THE LATE BLAST IN OAKLAND

If you're expecting a Con Report here which attempts to report the Convention -- as if it were written for some newspaper, with details of the programme, of the parties, of every conceivable event -- you won't find it here. The only "convention" this Con Report reports is the one I know about.

This convention began on the weekend of July 25-26. The Pacificon II (the 22nd World Science-Fiction Convention) didn't begin until September 4, full seven weeks afterward. To me, it was all the same convention going on and on with an occasional (and muchly appreciated) breathing spell. And it all began, and ended, in Oakland....

PART ONE (OF TWO PARTS): WITH BALLARD SPECIAL & SHOTGUN

ANY convention begins for me when fans start arriving at some spot for the specific purpose of enjoying a few days' fannish festivities. It begins, more precisely, when I have to meet someone just arriving, or make arrangements for someone just arriving ... but considering that it's usually Robbie and I who're just arriving at most cons, they usually begin (for me) with arrangement-making which I must attend to for ourselves.

However, the Pacificon II has been subject to some unusual circumstances which seemed destined to set it apart from most other conventions. But its most unusual aspect for Robbie and me was that things actually got rolling with someone who couldn't attend. Even though the Kujawas were making a trip west, they could not be in Oakland over Labor Day weekend. Gene was obliged to attend the '64 Nationals for skeet shooters in Reno, Nevada, during the first week of August. But they could neither remain out here a full month nor make a second trip out that soon afterward.

Consequently, BettyK settled for a mid-July trip through Albuquerque to Los Angeles, then up to the Bay Area, and finally over to Reno for the Shoot -- if she had to miss the convention, at least she'd get to visit a lot of fannish friends. And Gene had a '63 Lincoln Continental he was about to trade in on a '65 model, but he'd only put 17,000 miles on it so far -- so he considered this a sporting chance to put some mileage on that bus so it would appear worth what he'd paid for it. So they were flying low and contact-VFR, this trip, in an automobile rather than riding the gages in a twin-engined private aircraft. (Besides, it's ticklish getting over the Continental Divide, even with oxy equipment, unless you're a buzzard -- that is, private ships haven't pressurized cabins like commercial airline ships.)

But then, early in July, Betty's father went into hospital. Until almost the last minute, they didn't know whether to risk the trip or not; and as it was, they had to forego stopping through

Albuquerque (and missed seeing the Tacketts, who also couldn't attend the Pacificon 'cause the youngsters had to start school about that time).

And meanwhile, back in El Sobrante, Robbie got news that her mother was in hospital up in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. (Robbie's hometown is so far north that only some fluke of history saved it from being in Canada -- which wouldn't make much difference since she was born in St. Louis, anyway.) So Robbie took off to keep house until her mother got back on her feet.

Then, to cap it all, the Kujawas were driving across Arizona on Route 66 bound for LA, shortly after 8 o'clock on the morning of Friday, July 24. Ahead of them, a sedan appeared -- going in their direction, but with a big truck in front of it. Gene pulled out to pass them. He was doing about 70 mph and closing up, when the sedan whipped out in front of him to pass the truck. He hit the horn and brakes. But he quickly realized that the brakes weren't going to stop a heavy Lincoln that short of an impending crash at 70 mph, not even if they happened to be damned good brakes.

So, of course, he turned off the highway. Now, he could go a bit easy-on -- through there, say -- but would hit that rough terrain and have the car booming about out of control. Or he could do it a bit hard over -- there, approximately -- and slam into a wild skid the soft-riding car, wobbling like a sick whale, could never get out of. Scrambled eggs, if they flipped. Betty's spraddled luxuriatingly, as was her wont, in the "suicide seat" without her belt fastened -- bust some ribs if it were, probably. But something would have to be done about her, as they say in the fanzines, Real Soon Now.

But if he went dead-on into the desert -- right there -- yes, all he'd have to worry about is jumping that 15-foot open culvert. Good belly-landing spot on the other side, if it'll reach -- it ought to -- cripes, if this barge only had wings! Airborne, now. Nose dropping. Steering wheel will come back into the driver's chest, with the driver going forcibly to meet it; so lean sideward in the seat to clear it -- and slam hard into Betty, doing it! As they hit, then, Betty rolled over him to wedge herself into the windshield, albeit rather less abruptly than if she'd been thrown into it. But Gene's jackknifed forward to the dash where the tippy top of his skull meets the little electric-eye gizmo. He didn't black out, exactly; he must have sat up at some time during the proceedings, because he remembers the steering wheel bending down and up, down and up ---

Naturally, any small head-wound however slight bleeds like the very devil, as any man knows who's cut himself shaving. So Betty found herself sprawled across Gene, who's bleeding all over everything. She saw the well-frosted windshield and thought he must've gone into it -- until she noticed the long strands of hair dangling from the shattered glass and knew darned well they weren't his! She was badly bruised, too. But that was all.

The Lincoln Connie was a complete washout.

So the convention began for me at shortly after midnight, that night. At approximately 11 p.m., the Kujawas got me out of the sack (Robbie was still in Idaho, though due back that Sunday evening) by phoning from Flagstaff to say that, with one thing and another, they'd decided to skip Los Angeles and were renting another car to drive straight on to the Bay Area and would I fix them up with reservations, there's a good lad!?

So between midnight and one ayem, Saturday morning, July 25, I made arrangements for someone just arriving for a few days' fannish festivities. They got stuck with a room overlooking the swimming pool at a motel just off Oakland's Jack London Square, with Room Service for breakfasts (though Gene had to go down for his pancakes, they wouldn't bring them up cold) and rather good food in the dining accommodations. In fact, I was rather lucky. The only thing was, the place jiggled a bit when diesel express trains roared past on the tracks just outside.

Sunday evening, the 26th, I picked up Robbie at the airport and we had dinner with the Kujawas that night. (The Busbys should be dined there sometime -- it's called "The Dombay Bicycle Club"). On Monday night, Al Halevy and Bill Donaho took them to Sausalito for dinner -- where the fog lifted on their arrival, as per instructions, to give a view of lights sparkling across the Bay. And Tuesday, I think it was, Halevy guided them on a tour of The City. Tuesday nite had a small fangathering for them at Ben Stark's home -- and having followed me in an Olds 98 (Nat'l Skeetshooters official car Gene had picked up here) on that Berkeley Hills route I always take to work, they now know why I own a small foreign car! Wednesday night, Rog (Phillips) and Honey Graham greeted them (and us) in the spaghetti joint they'd been wishing to find since they arrived, having a yen for some. Thursday night, Bill Donaho (for TAFF) treated them (and us) to dinner at Spengler's, a rather reknowned fish house in Berkeley. And on Friday, they proceeded to Reno for the Shoot.

During this festive week, I must confess, we'd been imbibing rather freely of the Kujawas' scotch whiskey -- a most solemn ceremony which seems (we hope) to have become an annual event, having something to do with the renewal of certain subscriptions to g2. So we were in good shape and in the peak of training, as were the Kujawas, for any such festivities as might occur amidst several hundred skeet shooters

and their families

and assorted hosts,

all, or

almost all, waving shotguns and hollering, "Launch!" at odd moments. The upshot was, with the Kujawas' full connivance, Robbie and I tossed a few things together on Tuesday, July 28, and followed them to Reno -- pursuant, of course, to conducting some suitable Nevada tests of equipment and personnel, in preparation for the forthcoming fannish blast in Oakland.

And so, I took along my "Ballard Special"....

By the time we'd reached Reno, Gene had already cinched the national championship in .410 gauge and come within one shot of setting a world record, scoring 99 hits out of a possible 100. We dined that night at Eugene's, one of the better troughs, with an Ohio Supreme Court judge and a fellow named John Machette who's a former South American airlines pilot. Machette was a bit late, meeting us at the restaurant after we'd been seated -- he'd been tied up in a "shoot-off" between contestants who'd tied scores that day, and stayed on to see the outcome. We got further comment on it next day, when we met John out at Harold's Gun Club (about 8 miles outside Reno); there'd been some 16 contestants in the "shoot-off" but he said the first shoot eliminated most of them. "Sort of separating the men from the boys, huh?" Betty cajoled him; and Machette grinned. "Yeah, us 'boys' got out of there pretty fast," he said.

Before going out to the Gun Club, I had risen at my usual crack-of-dawn that morning and set off from our motel (Gene got us into a small, comfortable one just a block from their Holiday Inn, crammed as it was with skeet-shooters) to find myself a suitable chapeau for the occasion. So I marched downtown into a National Dollar Store and bought me the biggest, blackest brand-new cow country sombrero I could find. Robbie almost made me wear it to dinner that night. But it proved a wise acquisition in the blazing sun on the shooting range, where I prowled around looking into display booths of expensive shotguns and watched Gene's shooting team go through their paces, busting skeet-birds with monotonous regularity. Betty and Robbie remained in the clubhouse, yaliking up a storm and perusing the display of silver trophies.

I had repaired to the shelter of the clubhouse (which, though its air-conditioning didn't quite cope, kept a well-stocked bar and equally popular chow line) and resumed my practice of girl-watching (these shotgunners do bring a choice assortment of chicks along on these shoots) when Betty discovered 4 quarters in her purse. So she ups and has her fling at Nevada's mad gambling passion, the one-arm bandit. She walked back in a few minutes with a rather peculiar look on her face and 42 bucks clutched in both hands....

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Later, I just happened to recall Betty having mentioned (in an unguarded moment) that she'd like to have some photos taken for friends in odd places, such as England. And while Betty had hopefully forgotten about it -- and their Polaroid, and their movie camera -- we just happened to have our cheap, little box camera along. So while Robbie loaded it with Kodakolor, I buckled on my "Ballard Special" and we took Betty off up the shooting range where I introduced her to some of the finer points of true western sportsmanship, otherwise known as gunfighting, which Robbie dutifully filmed. The subsequent prints are rather beautiful color shots with such captions as, "Now, make like that's John Boardman scootin' thru the brush, out there, and ...". I took over as cameraman during restful moments while the clean desert breeze wafted the gunsmoke away. These have been distributed to a very select number of fans, with a request for their opinion as to precisely what we should do about the situation.

But that night was the night Gene was tied up, what with a new President of the Nat'l Skeet Shooters being elected and a banquet laid on afterward. So Betty takes us out to dine on her gambling gains. I think if Ella Parker had walked in, then, we might have demormonized Utah and reestablished Fort Bridger, or reversed the outcome of the American Revolution, or taken Arizona away from Goldwater and given it over to the rampaging Apaches. It was a damned good thing Chief Red Feather didn't ride in with a few thousand Oglalla Sioux, not to mention the Hunkpapas or any of the rest of the Siou'an Nation. We'd have brought back the buffalo as far East as South Bend and held a wild, drunken victory celebration with the Tacketts in Old Santa Fe, or maybe the Pueblo de Santo Domingo. We counted coup, that night.

Altho we went out to the range, next day, a thundershower came grumbling over the distant mountains and wind gusts were gusting -- so we took Betty back to town, holed up in the Holiday Inn, and had our final drink together while the shower passed over us. Then, bidding our adieux, we rode slowly off into the setting sun. (Actually, we returned home via Carson City, a bit of a dogleg south of Reno, not caring for the hairy climb back over Donner Pass.)

That completed our Nevada Tests -- and thanks to the Kujawas, we Gibsons enjoyed an exceedingly pleasant few days of fangab punctuated with shotgun blasts, which often seemed appropos to the subjects being discussed.....

The following week or ten days were relatively quiet. I had full opportunity to develop certain fiendish plans with regard to the forthcoming Pacificon II in general, and a certain TAFF winner in particular. There was nothing small or cheap about the schemes I plotted then.

Someone else was doing the small, cheap plots. I had expected they would.

So one night, Bill Donaho rang us up with the news that he'd just received a package in the mail. The peculiar thing about it, first off, was the return address -- it was a name and San Francisco address totally unfamiliar to Donaho. But it was a small package, Bill said, and noticably lightweight. Much too light, Bill thought, to contain any explosive device. (Of course, he knows nothing about certain explosives.) But he'd taken care, really he had. He'd opened it with a butcher knife and spatula whilst he was alone and no one else was near. Charming old blighty, Bill is.

And he'd found it all stuffed with wads of cotton. And he'd begun separating them with kitchen knife and spatula, searching carefully among them. And he'd exposed part of some creature. It was a webbed foot.

So naturally, he'd carefully replaced the wadding, closed the package, and retied it. And what should he do, he asked?

And naturally, while he'd been talking, I'd been thinking. If the lightweight package had a detonator cap, a blob of plastic explosive or a few turns of Primacord, his hands would've been blown off when he cut the string -- the knife and spatula being deposited no

doubt somewhere in the midst of his barrel-sized ribcage: But then I wouldn't be hearing him tell about it; and besides, tiny, lightweight detonators are neither commercially available nor easily made.

The most likely infernal-type contents for a lightweight package would be a tarantula. The southwestern species is quite notoriously poisonous. But I doubted that anyone would have imported one from West Texas to mail from San Francisco; more likely, he'd get one of the local species -- which would be amusing, since few people are aware that California tarantulas aren't at all poisonous. But then, Dill mentioned the webbed foot. It was no tarantula.

And it couldn't be a gila monster -- not in any lightweight box. Even when small, these inhabitants of New Mexico are squat, thickset reptiles. The big ones are sometimes two feet long and poisonous as hell. It'd tear anything but a wooden box to pieces.

An even happier thought was that snakes don't have webbed feet, either.

But when Dill ended his recital with a simple request -- what should he do now? -- I answered immediately, "Call the cops." And Dill said okay, he would.

Then I hardly had time to light a cigarette and take a couple of puffs. When I'd answered him, I was already remembering that 'Frisco is a Pacific seaport. I was realizing how such things might be more readily imported from Southeast Asia than from West Texas -- I was almost beginning to appreciate some of the feelings of a Mayland Smith -- when the phone rang again.

It was Dill. The Oakland cops had arrived in astonishingly quick time. They'd opened the package and found a common desert-variety lizard that had been dead for quite some time. It was a joke. (But the cops would agree with my own assumption -- not that any friends of Walter Green might attempt murder by mail, but that among the hopheads and screwball "beats" with whom they associate could be one who might never have met Donaho, but who'd just do it "for kicks.") So then I told Dill Donaho in simple, concise terms exactly what I thought of a fathead who'd open a package like that while he's alone.

However, it was an amusing joke. At least, what I found amusing about it was that Dill had just published his "Apologia" -- no doubt it was just a small token of their appreciation.

On the Wednesday night following this incident, Dill Donaho was throwing a party at his place for the Early Arrivals to the Pacificon II. He'd let out that it was to be a "nonpartisan" affair, but as someone observed, that night, apparently some of the local "nonpartisans" were still too partisan to attend. We were a bit late arriving and somewhat early to leave. But that afternoon, we'd received another phone call.

It was from Ted and Jean Engel. Ted's an oldtime fan, and Jean might still be betterknown to convention fans as Jean Carrol. They'd jetted out from New York to L.A., rented a car, and toured up the coast to a state of complete nervous exhaustion on the hairpin turns of Route One. It's quite scenic, to be sure, but if that kind of driving gets you upset you're not likely to notice much scenery. They'd just made it to a service station on the Main Drag in El Sobrante -- yep, they'd found the place -- and were ready to collapse. So I tooled my little bus down and led them back up the gulch to our house, and they did. Later, we got 'em checked into a motel in Berkeley near Rog' Phillips' home (they went over and had him fix breakfast for them, the next morning) and I took Ted out to get a quart of milk at a liquor store and a couple hamburgers at a soft ice cream joint -- it was late at night, and neither of them had felt like eating until then.

So that's why we got to Dill's party rather late, the Engels both riding with us in our li'l car. And naturally, we had no desire to make a night of it. But when we marched in there with Jean in our front ranks, Danny Curran did the most beautiful double-take I've seen in a long time. And he proceeded to get awfully drunk.

But I wasn't about to get soggy with nostalgia over the Dear, Departed Days in New York when Danny, Dick Ellington, Art Saha and I toured the Village bars -- before Danny and Dick plunged completely off into that weird fringe-world of beatnikdom and Art found his way back to the staid world of squaredom (and I roamed through both their ethereal world and another more solid, albeit fannish world) -- no, I had no thoughts of that nor of Jean Carroll's old place on Riverside Drive. I had other things on my mind; the Past was dead, and the Present was very much alive.

Robbie had discovered, a month or so earlier, that the Pacificon II Committee had no idea about making a convention banner to hang across the front of the hotel auditorium where all the programme (except the banquet) was to be held. And damme if she didn't volunteer! Well, the thing was to be nylon net and Al Halevy intended to get a very heavy gauge of industrial aluminum foil for the lettering. So naturally he simply couldn't get that aluminum foil and Robbie tried to cut letters out of ordinary kitchen aluminum foil which tore to pieces even when you weren't looking at it.

And the damned curtain-drop over which the banner was to be pulled across the front of -- if you follow me -- was twenty feet above the auditorium stage and a good 25 feet across.

Well, she got 25 feet of nylon net, cut letters out of poster-board and covered them with kitchen aluminum foil (after I'd shown her how to draw them) and we spread the net and stapled the letters in place. The thing was done just 2 hours before the Engels arrived. So when Halevy, and Bill Donaho, and Alva Rogers, and Len Stark each asked if we'd got the banner done that night, we could say we had. I just kept thinking that we didn't have the damned thing put up yet -- because I knew who'd have to do it! And the next day was Thursday, and the convention began on Friday.....

But Thursday, we had to get over to Halevy's place in East Oakland and give him a hand with some stuff, too. (The other Committee members couldn't get off work!) There was some artwork for the auction Alva Rogers had hired a billboard sign-truck to haul up from Castro Valley and left for us to manage from there. There were some half-dozen wicked-looking Hugos suitably slung in missile-launching racks. And there were several hundred tons of Regency paperbacks that had been kindly donated to be given out to convention attendees, plus a couple truckloads of other assorted gear, equipment, puppets, mess-kits and entrenching tools -- the sort of things commonly found about any World Science-Fiction Convention. For this, we had our little forty-and-eight Fiat sedan plus Al's Rambler American (a model from one of their small years). But seeing Halevy had already made something of a dent in things, we got with it, loaded up, followed him in tight formation through the Lake Merritt approach pattern and dived into the garage deep in the bowels of the Hotel Leamington.

Having unloaded both cars and got the stuff moved upstairs, the three of us proceeded to put up the convention banner. Difficulties immediately arose. The wire Robbie had seen, that the thing was to be slung from, was broken by someone who'd last used the auditorium, with just the ends left hanging from the hooks and a good chunk missing from the middle. The splintery wreck of a stepladder a waiter found for us was barely high enough to reach the hooks if you stood on top of it. Then the grommets tore out of the nylon net when I tried to haul it up by the end, and Robbie hadn't brought along her grommetting kit or extra grommets.

Halevy remembered he had other work to do. I gave the auditorium a slight bluish atmospheric tinge with a few choice remarks, gave some rather specific instructions to Robbie, and sat down to have a smoke. In a short while, she was back with a new grommetting kit. A hotel majordomo had hauled in a proper stage stepladder, a 30-footer, and I proceeded to demonstrate that I'd once learned to handle one single-handed. The banner went up.

Don't ask me what held it up. Several fans were already expressing puzzlement over the electrician's toolpouch I had slung on my hip -- to the few who read g2, it even seemed oddly familiar....

That job done, we drove home to El Sobrante, got out of our jeans, washed up, fed the cats and had a bite ourselves. Then we dressed a bit more presentably and drove back to the hotel. Robbie'd offered to work on the Registration Line, that night.

There was already a sizeable crowd, of course. The party at Bill's had already brought forth the Carrs, the Lupoffs and the Heaps, besides the Engels, and the Simms came in a bit later with some barbecued salmon, or at least Roger said it was, and there were assorted other characters from near and far. To these were added such notable names as -- at the hotel, that Thursday night -- Forrie Ackerman, Don Franson (I had a bundle for his N3F room), Nick Falasca bolting together display stands in the Art Showroom, Al "WC" Lewis, the Pelzes, the Mulans'... and then, Ron Ellik showed up. Katherine Mulan says, "Ron Ellik, where are the tickets?"

Lance Corporal, retired Ellik digs through his ditty bag and his musette bag and mutters something about Ted Johnstone's car and a door to an airport. I raised a querulous eyebrow at Rick Sneary and he shrugged. Then Ron goes scurrying off and for the next half-hour or so, I understand he's looking for Ted Johnstone about a paper bagful of some sort of raffle tickets. Then he finds Johnstone, but no bag of tickets. So he has to get back out to the airport in a hurry, and I stroll over to him.

"Just one thing, before we start off," I says to him. "Which airport is it?"

So we nip out to the Oakland Airport and there beside one of the glass doors of the terminal is a brown paper bag with a fat roll of raffle tickets in it. "About once a year," says Ron, as he climbs back in the car and tosses the bag in the back seat, "I get to wondering why people refer to me as 'Squirrel.'"

"And then you find out?" I asked, as I firewalled it back to the Freeway.

"Uh huh!" Ron says.

I completely forgot to show him the little gold plaques on the sunshades inscribed "JOE GIBSON - Intergalactic Pilot" and "ROEBIE GIBSON - Intergalactic Copilot"

The only thing I remember about the rest of that night is that I was down in the bar with Nick Falasca.

The next day, when we arrive back on the Mezzanine Floor (and Robbie goes right back on the Registration Line) we have just managed to catch the Opening Session of the Convention and put up a small display for our own "Eit Extra" Raffle (which I suppose deserves some explanation) when I am struck by the pants Dian Pelz is wearing. Figuratively speaking, of course. In fact, my fancy's so attracted by them that I follow them into the Art Showroom. "Hullo, Dian Pelz," I say, and we are busy saying hello when Bruce Pelz looks up and says, "Gibson, that will cost you three issues of g2!"

Whereupon I frown down at Dian's lovely, mischievous grin, get myself a firmer grip on reality, and say, "To hell with it -- let's go for a whole year's subscription!" And we proceed to say hello some more, thus Starting The Convention in most suitable and proper style.

In the midst of it, it suddenly dawned on me that as a serious connoisseur both of excellent scotch whiskey and of exceedingly beautiful women, I had meant exactly what I'd said!

(CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH)

NOISE ...As is not at all uncommon, right after a convention, there are some new recipients of this so-called fanzine, this month and for varied numbers of months to come. So this means I am behaved, again. Everytime I get behaved, I start trying to explain (away) this fanzine. And first thing I always say, if I think of it, is that this ain't no fanzine at all. At least, I don't think it is. I've got some very definite ideas about what a fanzine ought to be and this isn't it.

Instead, I publish this thing just about every month with my artwork and whatever I care to write and nothing by anybody else except letters of comment. I do this because it's what I want to do. It probably started because I finally realized why I don't like to write for others' fanzines. When I write for others, they get the loc's and I get to see only the ones they consider worth printing. This not only deprived me of egoboo, but also of fights I could've been having with somebody. These circumstances, particularly in the latter instance, were unbearable!

However, you don't find any pleas for loc's around here or any threats that somebody won't get this thing anymore if they don't write. I suppose I could say that technically the title of this thing is "Gee Squared" but if I were so particular as that, I'd be typing it as G² all the time instead of the much-easier g². Most people simply refer to it vocally as "Gee-Two" anyway, even if it doesn't have anything to do with Intelligence, tho I've heard of several who refer to it vocally in even more improbable terms than that. None of which gets me worried much.

Sometimes I wonder about the people who read this thing however -- like last issue, in my Pre-Con Report, I referred to L. Ron Hubbard as having written "IF THIS GOES ON---" and then proceeded to discuss what was obviously the plot of "FINAL BLACKOUT" ... but if it's not odd that I wasn't called on that, I also stated the bar in the Leamington was open from 11 ayem to 2 p.m....nope, nobody bit on that one, either!

About 100 copies of each issue of this thing get mailed out. Paying subscribers get anywhere from 65 to 75 of them -- tho, lately, they're accounting for a bit more than that -- and the remainder go out as "sample copies" to whomever leaves their name&address around in some fanzine I happen to find handy at the moment. Some fans have been getting this thing for years just as "sample copies" and may never subscribe -- they'll get a copy one month, another in three months and maybe a couple two months in a row -- but of course, this is at my indiscretion and I can cut 'em off entirely any time I care to. In a couple of cases, I stopped caring when they wrote to complain about getting it. But I've had a number of fans come gloating to me about how they get this thing free, without ever subscribing, when I know they've never received more than 3 or 4 issues in the past year. This thing comes out 12 times a year, tho, while 3 or 4 issues would be the entire year's output for a good many fanzines.

But nobody gets a copy of this thing simply because they'd written me a letter of comment, not even if I print it. Nobody gets it free simply because I've called them a slob in the 4th paragraph of page umpteen, either. The "sample copies" circulation, small as it is, remains strictly at my own whim. Actually, I get more new subscribers that way than I've ever gotten from any mention of this thing in a fanzine review column. Those reviews mostly get other editors sending me their 'zines for trade -- and I don't trade, either.

It has to be done this way if I'm to keep it down to 100 copies. I can handle that many, write them, do the artwork, collate and address and mail them. Just barely! If I traded, there would be no "sample copies" left to send out and cadge new subscribers and, even with that, I'd have to increase the printing to 150 copies.

It would be very easy to lay out a fanzine that has a circulation of 250 or more. But I won't do that much work. I have absolutely no desire to do it.

This thing I publish -- because I enjoy it -- is not primarily interested in science-fiction. It isn't primarily interested in fans, either. There's too damned little worth anyone's interest in either case, when you start categorizing like that. This issue and next, I'm telling about the convention I attended -- after all, it is not exactly the same one everyone else attended (continued back page)

An apology's owed to several people who renewed their subs or newly subscribed during the past month or two:

LOX

you may find your subscriptions starting with this issue -- and if you didn't get last month's issue, you didn't miss much, but if it's a question of completing a collector's file, write me and I'll see what can be done. In another month or two, I'm going to go thru my own file and cut it down to only a couple copies of each issue from the past three years; then I'll publish a list of what's left and offer them at some idiotically low price. My filing-space is crammed full.

STAN WOOLSTON, 12832 Westlake St., Garden Grove, Calif. 92640:

Perhaps I should say "gee" to you, after all these speculative issues of dragging a lil' world of fans across the void from one end of the starfields to another--or from middle to you and back again. You brought out a few points worthy of thinking about, involving an innocent bunch of humanoids in divers situations, and then, on return to Terra, let them relieve their pent-up feelings by jailbusting.

This reminds me of when "the family" came from Illinois to California, to "catch" a quake (about 8 miles from epicenter), and our jaunt back to the middle west where a winter made us decide that an earthquake-prone land was better than living in the midst of blizzards. Our earthquake experience was unexpected, but we survived it, and so amnesia had a chance to let us gloss over the whole thing--but to live a winter, which was longer and more repeated (more shivers of cold to shivers of fear) was decisive. Maybe we could have moved to Florida or elsewhere, but we returned to California.

And so, after returning to Terra, the gang decides, I assume, that there's no old place, home. It has changed too much, so the shipboard life with Joe the Human Quake (tear'em down) as mastermind will be the Life to Lead. Maybe a future craft

+ Stop right there! What is this "Human Quake" business you're pulling off here? This won't do, Woolsten. You're tempting me to do some terrible act, such as telling everyone you write such lo-o-ong + rambling LoCs that I could print excerpts from them in five or six + subsequent issues and make you a contributor to this lettercol for + the next six months without ever getting more than one letter! So + watch yourself, there.

For many years I've thought (as plot-gimmick) of the method of seeding worlds dropped in on with a special method involving satellites set to orbit the worlds with "faults" such as without proper atmosphere by first seeding the place with special primitive animals ((+you must mean microbic "animals" with primitive cell-structure)) that can live on surface and liberate its own oxygen and/or carbon monoxide, and in process tending to break down whatever kind of improper (for human) atmosphere there may be. Maybe a century or so later part of the satellite package--or one of a series of satellites--would be set to dip into atmosphere to release other types of plants that by that time should be able to adapt to conditions. Perhaps, in fact, it would be a matter of the satellite landing and opening itself to atmosphere, with plants then released from suspended animation, each in a sort of tablet of soil or nutrients, and so allowed to develop. Later, other satellites can drop other seeds, of a type in succeeding satellites from molds to mosses and then later herbs, shrubs, grasses, trees, and with bees and other selected insects, and with each stage a balanced ecology.

+ It's things like this which make me believe that science-fiction's + been playing games for the past 15 years, while scientists have + been playing for keeps. Stan, your idea has already been given + quite a bit of serious consideration in some journals -- specifi- + cally with regard to "terraforming" the planet Venus. (It jolts me + to find many fans who don't know these things, who don't even know + where to learn about them, who know only what they can read in the

+ poorly-contrived stf we have today!) But if you think about it,
 + you'll have to admit that an awful lot could go wrong with any
 + such scheme to create a manmade world in a few centuries comparable
 + to natural worlds nature takes millions of years to develop. And
 + that could become one helluva stf yarn -- a story about a manmade
 + world involving just a few little mistakes! The trouble with men
 + trying to balance ecologies is that sometimes they aren't so well-
 + balanced, themselves. Also, since nature takes millions of years
 + to do the job, it can make all the mistakes it wants -- it only has
 + to be right once in awhile. But to do the same job in just a few
 + centuries, you'll have to be right all the time, every time. Just
 + one or two mistakes could leave you stuck with a world that's damn'
 + difficult to live on!

Perhaps for the excuse for a second jaunt into space the star-mapping might be a sideline with a few recruits from ecologists, if there are any such on planets of the Solar System who'll volunteer.

+ There will be. The experience we'll get "terraforming" these
 + worlds will come in handy. But now that you mention starmapping,
 + d'you know that was the one thing I really didn't get across in
 + that Starship Series? I've been giving it some thought, and it
 + seems I could do it, now, so everyone gets the picture.....

The stars are like specks of sand on a sky-photo. Should these specs inspire the term "speculation"?

+ Now I am gonna tell on you! Robbie and I wore curious costumes at
 + the Pacificon masquerade -- very curious, indeed, to fans who had
 + not seen my illos for the Starship Series -- with me in sandals,
 + swimtrunks and a toolpouch belted onto my hip and Robbie in leotard
 + with gold hi-heel pumps and gold earphone-helmet. And on the front
 + of her leotard, she had the "SSF" symbol and "speculative science-
 + fiction" in small border-inscription. When Stan Woolston saw her,
 + he squinted hard at that symbol, then stood back to get the full
 + effect. "Well?" Robbie prompted him. "I'm Speculating!" Woolston
 + sez. "I'm Speculating!!"

BETTY KUJAWA, 2819 Caroline St., South Bend, Indiana:

Train trip home they can give back to the Indians....still as rattling, bouncing and jolting as it was in 1945....food a little better, but bar-man in club-car took his own sweet time making drinks ...maybe you'd get one in 45 minutes, or maybe not. Our drawingroom turned out to be quite nice...too too damn little with both beds down of course. During day with beds up it was great....too burpy to read much, couldn't, sob, do my double-croistics, but the scenery was something! Saw me some deer and antelope and ol' skulls of cattle and a whole mess of mountains and rocks and things spectacular.

But leave us face it.....Im a midwesterner, I was born and bred for greenery, rolling hills, woods and thickets, and many many streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and, above all, easy access to the Great Lakes... all those yaller hills of California, and the brown and yellow-grey ones of Nevada, and all those vistas and views and high-places..... not for me. I want some trees close in, I want it all green-green-green, and most of all I gotta have my autumns..... leaves turning, smell of wood-smoke, maples and oaks and birches with rivers and lakes all around.

+ Sounds ghastly.

WRAI BALLARD, 4230 University Way NE, Seattle, Wash. 98105:

Just a note...got to get some food in the place and a few other things...some day I'll tell you about the pleasant day I had at work...like I told the girls that the convention had left me with the conditioned reflex of reaching out and grabbing any girl who got near you, and I had a pleasant day grabbing girls. Now they are debating whether or not I should be allowed to go to the next convention. Supervisor insists I should save and go to London. Nope, but maybe the westercon.

+ Wrai, I'd sure hate for those British femmefans to learn that you
 + look like a spittin' image of Ron Blilik, only a bit older and much
 + more experienced. Why, it might spoil young Ronel's trip over
 + there, nextyear, something awful. We'll just have to keep it under
 + our hat, thassall.

WIM STRUYCK, Willebrordusstr. 33E, Rotterdam 11, Holland:

Thanks again for the Geetoos. Numbers 3 and 9. Thanks too for the cooperation with Betty and Gene on the postcard you sent me. That "small hotel" in Reno. My God. Didn't you get claustrophobia (or anti-claustrophobia) in that? If you ever visit Betty again, in the near future, ask her to show you the picture (which I sent her I think) of the "hotel" we stayed in this year. It got 4 (small) guest-rooms, and we paid 8 guilders (about \$2.50) per day and person for a room, with full board. Everything (coffee, tea, meals, use of two bicycles and a guide into the woods) included.

I didn't know you'd spend your holidays, or part of them, together. Knowing Betty, she must have been enjoying this "foursome" immensely. Who talked most?? Robbie or Betty?

We had very nice holidays, too. Very different from our usual trip abroad. This time we stayed in Holland in one of the most quiet parts, and in a very small village. Deep woods around it. With deer, pheasants and the like. And no people. And that's what I wanted. As a matter of fact our intention first was making a trip around this province (or county) staying 2, 3 days each time. But we stayed in our first hotel all along. Though we did make some further trips on the motorbike.

+ By golly, Gene Kujawa needs some over-water experience in that
 + twin-engined plane! Four rooms in that hotel, you say? Three
 + couples would only need 3 of them and Wrai could sleep with our
 + guns in the 4th, and -- deer and pheasant in those woods, huh?!
 + Tsk. And No People! N-o P-e-o-p-l-e!!! If only we could!

ROSEMARY HICKEY, 2020 Mohawk, Chicago, Ill. 60614:

About ---- years ago, one of my dates did try to describe and identify the stars to me - but I thought he was using a cute approach to get me down on the grass in the park...and spent most of my reactive thinking in anticipating unastronomical moves and didn't pay as much attention to what he was saying.

+ Y'mean he never even got to "Be A Friendly Girl - Kiss Me!" ???

Now you and g2 come along and speak in such terms as leave me respectful and somewhat abashed at my ignorance. I do get the essential relationships and concepts of time and space but my one huge sickness/block about numbers louses up my attempts to do the equations with you.

Whether this next sentence is taken by you as a compliment or just the stupid remark from one with a lop-sided education is all right with me because I mean it the nice way. I have been fascinated from the beginning with your approach, the results of your research, the experiences you've reported during these research moments, and the reactions (as they appear in LOX) of those with some know-how who could second your statements or argue with them from strength.

+ It may not have been too obvious, Rosemary, but in one respect at
 + least that Starship Series was a failure -- or anyway, I consider
 + it a failure. I chose the wrong way to handle the astronomy it
 + involved. I was able to do a little...anyway, I did manage to give
 + some idea of our own cluster of stars and the Sun's general loca-
 + tion within it...but I had to quit with that! It seemed to me the
 + project fell apart when I tried to "map" our star-cluster (and dis-
 + covered, in the process, that it contains between 2,000 and 3,000
 + suns) because such "mapping" got us into all kinds of mental gym-
 + nastics. And it took up so much time, I never got around to some

- + really interesting angles -- not merely such things as the E, A, F, G, K and M types of stars, or even which types are most likely to have planets and why, which would seem to be dry and dull stuff by itself -- because I had to get on with that monthly series. If those 11 issues had all been 100-page issues, I could've really done justice to the material and delved into all the wild adventures one could envision in such fabulous background. It would've been quite a monumental piece of skull-pounding work, too. And with damned few equations. You know I hate to resort to numbers.
- + But that series is done, now. I don't have any pressure of monthly sequences of events to dream up. I can tackle a subject, dig through it, and come out with a fat article and some good, clear illos even if it takes a couple-three months to get it right. And the Starship Series did help me see where some things need saying and what won't work as well as a few things that do work.

I wish to heaven you would give me another label than "art work" for what you produce in g2. Fans have used this term for everything from the scratchings on a stencil to paper master daubings to the excellent (- -) which you do. Only once in all the published (pro) art have I been moved by a painting. Never have I been so consistingly pleased by communication through art as in g2. If you should happen to have an extra run-off of "Tail-out in deceleration - Coming in past Alpha Centauri" from your Vol. 3 No. 9, it would be most gratefully received - and mounted...

- + It would be most happily bundled off to you, too, after all that egoboo -- but you know what happened, don't you? When that issue was collated, which of all the pages do you think we ran out of first? Yep, it had to be one of the two halves of that double-page spread. So all the other pages, we had extra copies of. Sho' 'Twas bound to happen.

When you're still having pre-Con tensions, we'll be on our way down the highway of adventure. Our route, this year, is Interstate 80 & it's completely strange to us. It's also a path unadorned by any fans. And as you are deeper into Con decisions, ours will be to explore this new road or that...should we investigate Marble, Colo., or go on to the next enticing prospect.

- + We couldn't all get to Oakland. But both Robbie and I had our fingers crossed about Ol' Sparks, here --

ROBERT P. DROWN, adventurer and world traveller:

April, 1922: Antwerp	-	July, 1964: Antwerp
Army transport		Merchant freighter
Chateau Thierry	---	S.S. Aloha State

Over 42 years between visits.

Should be back in Calif. before mid-September. (73)

- + But he didn't make it. Next card from him was from --

...S.S. Aloha State, Mobile, Ala.:

Going to miss it after all. Even if we leave here tomorrow morning, it will be Sept. 9th or 10th before the ship gets to the Bay Area.

Four days lost waiting around Port Tampa for cargo fouled up the sked.

Sort of counting on making it to the Pacificon..it would have been a good start for my vacation. Regards to the gang anyway. Hope you all have a good time.

- + Next year's Westercon (July 4th) will be in Long Beach, Lob ... if you miss that one, right there in your home port, I guess we'll just have to start campaigning for a World Con aboard the Aloha State, is all. How's the convention accommodations under Number Three hatch, there? (Cripes, Dick Lupoff was trying to promote

+ a "John Con" on St. John -- or was it a "Virgin-vention" in the
 + Virgin Islands -- for next year! But next year's World Con will be
 + in London, in case you're there.

CUYLER WARRELL BROOKS, JR., 911 Briarfield Rd., Newport News, Va.:

The cover and the pages about the con were good. I wish I was going!

I found your light green print on light blue paper rather hard on the eyes, but the letters and your comments were interesting. Especially since I had seen ZULU. I was not as impressed with it as Detty Kujawa seemed to be. Just an incident lifted out of history without any background given or any commentary on the significance, if any. It's a very easy way to make a movie, all you need is a history book and some dialogue. It is not truly drama in an artistic sense at all, but just storytelling.

+ Trouble with that is, Ol' Bill Shakespeare also considered it a very
 + practical way to write good drama. Your objection to the dim print
 + job was one of several half-dozen or so, and has been passed on to
 + the bloke wot got me that dim print job.

The letter from Russ Drahmin was a wonderful thing. I am almost sure that it was concocted as a subtle joke. If not, Russ must be quite a character, to say the least. I don't know if Wordsworth or Byron ever made it, but Keats at least wouldn't be out of place in a SF fanzine because he has appeared quite prominently in an SF book, namely THE BIRD OF TIME by Wallace West. I like suitable poetry in a fantasy novel. Tolkien and Mervyn Peake wrote their own, while West used Keats, Omar Khayyam, and others in BIRD OF TIME. I can't think of any other good examples right now. Oh, of course, THE WORM OUROROS by Eddison, but I never could see that the poetry he used added anything at all. It seemed to be singularly uninspired and pointless. I think Eddison was just showing off.

You should have referred Drahmin to the N3F booklet A KEY TO THE TERMINOLOGY OF S-F FANDOM which can be gotten for 20¢ from the N3F or free to members. It's nothing like complete, of course, but most things not in it can be picked up by inference, or you can always ask somebody. But really, I think the Drahmin letter is a hoax.

+ I wouldn't care if it were or not -- no more than I'd worry if you
 + were a hoax, Ned Brooks! But you may plug the N3F booklets all you
 + please, around here. I've been threatening to plug the N3F for
 + years. Fandom gave up hope that I might be a hoax, years ago.

ROBIN WOOD, Box 15, Amador City, Calif. 95601:

The cover was good. I sort of like that DEM's view of the Bay Area.

And not only does g2 have a good cover, it is useful. I fully intend to take this issue down to the con with me to use for reference now and then. Maps, floor plans, information about where to eat and get bottles, and little pointers here and there--what more could one ask for? Thanks. I figure on chucking the thing in my car where it can't possibly get lost. Unless I lose the car.

Such cheerful ramblings-on about world war II. Sort of makes one shudder. I just got out of the air force, and while I never had any such experiences, I must admit it was a little nerve wracking sitting in Germany during the Berlin Crisis knowing that good old Rhein-Mud would be one of the first bases hit if the lid blew off of that mess. And then later, being down in Florida during that Cuban mess, helping bring in God knows how much explosive type material, bombs and ammo and the like, knowing that those missiles down there were undoubtedly pointed to exactly where I was at.

And as I still have some reserve time to go, I keep wondering whether it will run out before they decide to call me up, put me on

a big Shakey and dump me in the middle of some southeast Asian jungle. ((+There's one staging area you ain't got to yet, son -- it's after + those first shots are fired and maybe accidentally you're still + alive and there's some sector of garbage dump you can crawl around + in and they've got other guys there trying to kill you and it just + doesn't stop, it keeps on. No member of that club wants you in it. + We like it to maintain an "exclusive" policy regarding new members. + But hell, I brought this up merely becuz I'd been telling about a + few hairy experiences in WW2 artillery observation planes, a year + or so back in this fanzine, as if "my war" was all fun&games -- and + what I want to make clear is, I think flying is all fun, especially + in small aircraft with a propeller on front and wings that can + tear loose and wheels that can fall off. Even without a 'chute. War is so damn stupid. I agree with what you said. The human race should be spread out onto as many planets as possible, as quickly as possible. At least then, if we blow up one world, it won't be the end of everything.

+ Seems to me getting off this planet, going out to new places, will + suit our natural inclinations better, too. According to current + archaeological evidence, men were hunters for about two million + years; in that time, any genetic strain who weren't hunters got + bred out of the species. Then, about ten thousand years ago, some + damned freak invented taxes -- and so, a gang of bully-boys got + enough loot in one pile to buy up stores and feed slaves and turn + a mud-wattle village into a city. And we've been trying to live + in a completely unnatural and inhuman way ever since. And going + crazy in mobs. I think there's a problem we just haven't licked + yet. We're bound to tackle it, settling new worlds.

I also found that after coming back to the states from Germany, that all the beer here tastes like carbonated dishwater. In fact, I have lost my taste for the stuff. German beer is veritable nectar of the gods.

Wim Struyck seems to have the idea with that little Moped. Everyone should have a little two-wheeler. I have a Honda myself. Only trouble here is, that if you want to travel on the hiway, traffic is so fast that you need a fairly powerful bike. The one I have is a little 150 cc two banger, but it looks like if I want to do very much freeway travel, I'll have to swap it in on a 250.

Have heard of "making bread" before, but as a hip way of mentioning that one was scraping up some coins.

Well, so much for now. Except to mention that the green ink on blue paper is sort of hard on the eyes. And where did you get that wild size of paper?

+ If Metcalf has any doubts that I got complaints about that green-on + -blue print job, here's another one, and I could print more.

ROY TACKETT, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107:

I guess I've got to take time out from various projects like doing a wee bit on FIVE (the bulk of which will be done at the grand and glorious CAPacon to be held shortly in Los Angeles ((+We heard about it when the survivors reached Oakland+)) when almost all good CAPAns will get together to discuss their plans for what they intend to do with fandom next year), cutting the last couple pages of my N'APazine, and just sitting around wondering when I'm going to get the big D out (like I started to run it off so that I could mail it ere we started for LA and discovered that the mimeo was out of ink and had to order some and I doubt that it gets here before we leave and the reason I don't run down to the store and buy some ink is that ordinary type ink plays billyhell with a closed drum mimeo), to get off a LoC to you on this, the latest Gee superscript deuce which is Vol. 3 no. 11 for August '64 or so it says here on the back page.

Well, if you must know, I used up all the ink running off the last issue of TIGHTBEAM for that ancient and honorable organization dear to the hearts of the 3H club as well as some more sensible types,

to wit, viz., and like, the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Did you know I was a member of the National Fantasy Fan Federation? ((+Yas+)) Boy, am I ever. Remind me to tell you sometime of my tour on the Directorate. Me 'n' Al Lewis, we had 'em whipped 'til Ol' Tyrannical come down with a case of the youknowwhat and chucked the whole bloody mess. If I'd a had any sense I would have, too, but I stuck it out and just to prove I'm a glutton for punishment I'm ready to have a go at it again.

+ Just tell me one thing: wot the livin' hell is a 3-H club?

But, anyway, as I started to say before I was rudly (rudly?) hauled off onto another tack this here now is a letter of comment on ---well, let's not go through all of that again.

Your mention of having scrawled on a blackboard somewhere in the dim and dank recesses of the Leamington that revolting slogan: "Sixty-four Frisco or Fight" moves me to observe that the time for the fight is almost at hand and were it not for the fact that I have to be back in the Duke City before labor day I would, indeed, be there for the fight.

+ And it was a sad thing for Robbie and me, ol' sorehead, that all
+ you Tacketts weren't here early as July 25 to partake in our she-
+ nannigans and Nevada Test as reported here, as well as later when
+ the Musquite Kid come down and such things happened as I am gonna
+ report here nextish. As for a fight, I heard one night at the con
+ there was an awful fight and I grinned sourly and went to look for
+ someone who maybe got his face scratched by some girl and surenuff
+ that's exactly what I found. And of course, it broke up after
+ everybody had his little brave talk. It just isn't like the old
+ days like when Will Sykora showed up at a NYork regional con and
+ started passing out handbills in the meeting hall of the Henry
+ Hudson Hotel that say in print the committee from ESFA/Hydra Club
+ stole the convention from him and were a bunch of Fascists and
+ Commies and the cops were called and came and hauled him out, and
+ Leek and Walt Willis and Bob Tucker and the rest of that 6th Fan-
+ dom crowd never mentioned such nastiness in their happy fanzines.

The con committee is aptly named for they certainly conned fan-
dom. They bid and received the convention for San Francisco. Jose-
phus, old chum, you will grant that as one who has been in 1799 of
San Francisco's 1800 bars, as well as a few scattered hither and yon
about the Bay, I know whereof I speak when I say that San Francisco
is--thank ghod--not Oakland and by no stretch of anybody's distorted
imagination is Oakland San Francisco.

And you it is that is adding to this microcosmic game of three-
card monte by trying to convince them poor'igurant easterners that
it isn't so bad after all. The Leamington, you say, is located in
Oakland's better downtown district when all the time you are knowing
that Oakland has no better downtown district. You indicate on your
map of dubious quality a skidrow area taking in an unspecified number
of blocks. Sure, and why not be admittin' that the whole town is one
big skid row?

+ Well, now you mention it, I personally consider presentday Frisco
+ to be pretty much of a damned dump, too. In fact, I dislike going
+ into either one of those towns unless I absolutely have to.

Sixty-four Frisco or Fight, buddy-boy, and I'll bet you it's
going to be a good one. Sigh. Or it would be if I were attending.
As it is I'll have to put up with the LASFS for a couple of weeks.

Or they'll have to put up with me. It figures to come out
about even.

+ Sho', man, and we had it all set up for you here! You wanted a
+ convention in San Francisco, we were fully prepared to get you
+ one. Why, Forry Ackerman was telling me hissself when he was just
+ checking out of the Leamington on the last day, as how he was just

10

+ finished with one convention and had to go start all over with
+ another one. Yessir, he had to go right over to San Francisco
+ becuz the Monster fans were having their very own convention over
+ there. And after all this trouble we took getting things arranged
+ for you, and then you don't come, is this how you show your grati-
+ tude? Tsk.

Robbie, do the Marines know that Reno is just waiting to be taken? Dear heart I spent a year some distance south of there at the N/D at Hawthorne. Weekend trips to Reno were regular affairs. The town was taken--often.

Ummm, Joe, why should you have a guilt complex about the war? ((+Mean that you're asking as if there was ever a good reason?+)) You feel guilty because you didn't get hit? Pfui! Lots of people didn't get hit. ((+Oh, I did, I did -- it was damned silly. I plucked a spent slug out of the air one night, it cut through my finger and I got blood poisoning so slight it went away in a few days. A couple slugs from a m.g. burst spanged off a village street and burned my shinbone onct. And a piece of magnesium shell dropped in my hole and burned off the front of one trouserleg and my foxhole had hot and cold water and I did the running. My shirt's gasflap was just right to patch my pants, next morning.+)) Ol' buddy, they tried to get me with everything from knives to aerial bombs and the only time I shed any of my type AB was once when I scratched myself on a hunk of coral while swimming off the north coast of New Britain. Sure it's rough and messy but you learn to live with it. You have to. So ol' Charlie bought it, eh? Well, here's to the next man who dies. ((+Uh huh -- and then's when you got damned scared that you'd become too indifferent and careless and get your fool ass shot off like some green recruit, just feeling too damned casual to duck when you must.+

It's a rough way to be. It's callous and unfeeling and don't-give-a-damn. Maybe it was the training. ((+That got to seem like it was a long time ago.+)) It was all for the Corps. That's a saying that's used jestfully these days but we meant it. Hell, Josephus, we didn't fight for Mom's apple pie and ice cream sodas or to stem the tide of militarism--we fought for the Corps and because that's what the Corps was for. If ol' Charlie bought it, he bought it for the Corps.

Looking at it in retrospect, it is, I guess, a pretty silly attitude. You fought because you were a Marine and that's what a Marine is supposed to do. You don't think about it too much.

It pays off in the end. Like I'm sitting here typing a letter to you and if my attitude had been different and I had stopped to reason it all out I likely wouldn't be doing that.

Ah, well.

Tell the people from IIMS INDECONTAMINABLE to have one for me. Sorry I can't make it but I hear there is an interesting little skirmish brewing out on Capella IV--a hell of a place, but you know how it is.

+ Since the thing was done, I've spent the ensuing 20 years digging
+ into the historic background of such quaint military customs and
+ it's quite interesting. Strategically, you learn that a phalanx
+ with locked shields and short, heavy spears can do the dirty job
+ with the least loss of men -- and there you have the Corps, and
+ what the Corps is supposed to do, and the reason for it. But a
+ Centurion can't consider himself among the lucky devils who won't
+ get killed like they would if the Corps didn't exist; he's in the
+ Corps and he has to think a bit differently. If he doesn't, the
+ Corps won't exist and those "lucky devils" will damned well have
+ to die. Unfortunately, we've also inherited some utter nonsense
+ from a bunch of ironclad nuts on draft horses about "chivalry" and
+ "dead heroes" and "live cowards" which very studiously ignores how
+ those nuts repeatedly got the hell shot out of them by stupid clods
+ with bows and arrows. Those stupid clods were the Corps.

+ Well, and those bully-boys with the taxes and slaves got their
+ citics running so the rich got richer and the poor, poorer, and
+ so they went out to conquer some more citics and get some more
+ people to pay taxes and kill off some of the dirt-poor bastards.
+ So we needed the Corps, or else civilization would've been the

+ end of all us dirt-poor bastards who just wanted to hunt and fish
+ and gather in the root-herbs and berries and maybe tank up on home-
+ brew and go on a little raid now and then. And if the water dried
+ up or the game got scarce we just moseyed over to the other side of
+ the hills and maybe wiped out a bunch of subhuman monkeys to make
+ room, but there weren't even many of them to bother about much, or
+ else the game would be scarce there too and it wasn't worth the
+ trouble. Seems to me we spent at least a million years developing
+ that way, into what's bound to become a star-roving species. And
+ wherever we'll need the Corps, now, we'll have it again.
+ Which is maybe a pretty silly attitude, too.

JOHN BOSTON, 816 South First St., Mayfield, Ky. 42066:

Could be that the reason for the relative dearth of true speculation compared to the so-called "Golden Age" is that the G.A. was essentially an unnatural condition. Whereas science fiction had been relatively circumscribed Before Campbell, he and his crew zealously burst through the artificial limits to new territory. A "population explosion" followed, and by the early fifties most of the territory had been staked out. Or compare it to a diamond field. When first discovered there will be a mad rush to the spot and a tremendous production -- mainly what is lying around on the surface. After all the readily accessible gems are carted off, the field isn't abandoned-- there just are fewer left, and they're harder to get to, but production, after sharply dropping, levels off and becomes more or less constant until the field is exhausted. Of course, the sf idea-mines will never become exhausted; the rate of consumption in the forties, however, was greater than the rate of replacement. Now maybe if an interdict was declared on sf writing for ten or fifteen years...

((+Seems to me that's exactly what has happened.+))

One advantage of the "'realistic' and 'believable' crap" is that it at least doesn't provoke the reader to laughter rather than thought. Great ideas and concepts have a way of failing to get across when the story is so completely ridiculous as to divert all attention from everything but the unfolding asinities of the plot. See the Lensmen and The Weapon Makers.

+ Right. And furthermore, the only reason any of that crud appear-
+ ing in those old pulpzines with untrimmed edges was ever consid-
+ ered "great" in its own day was simply because the s-f readers had
+ never seen anything better. I like your analogy of the "Golden
+ Age" very much, but perhaps you weren't aware that by far the most
+ unnatural condition it fostered was the number of damned fools who
+ brought out s-f magazines, thinking they could get rich overnight
+ by publishing science-fiction. I sold "stories" to some of them.
+ Some even got published. That era had all the "Gold Rush" earmarks
+ you'd care to look for.

+ But those laughable cornballs did have a few great ideas and con-
+ cepts. Are you telling me, now, that STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND or
+ A CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ or MAN IN A HIGH CASTLE contain one, single
+ great concept or idea? I don't even find them laughable. They're
+ merely uninteresting.

+ And why couldn't we have learned something useful from that highly-
+ touted 'Golden Age' other than how to write as smoothly as anything
+ in THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL? If Campbell and crew broke through
+ artificial limits to new territory, why the blazes couldn't we make
+ a regular practice of that? Ghu knows, I find plenty of artificial
+ limits imposed on today's highly-touted s-f -- and too much ignor-
+ ance of new territories just waiting to be explored by s-f! I've
+ hardly begun to explore such territories in this fanzine and I'm
+ having a ball with it.

+ The only honest compliment that can be made for early s-f, I be-
+ lieve, is that it was the best that could be had for its day. Not
+ for one minute would I consider that we ought to go back to it.

- + No, the trouble with today's science-fiction is that it damned'
- + well isn't the best that we ought to be getting right now.

ERIC BLAKE, P.O. Box 26, Jamaica, N.Y. 11431:

I agree with Stan Woolston's views on the here in literature. The amazing popularity of Burroughs indicates that people prefer heroes to anti-heroes. Hopefully, the sick degeneracy of much contemporary fiction is now on the way out, as authors discover that the public really wants fiction with heroes. If this sort of literature becomes widespread again, who knows - people might stop ridiculing patriotism, self-discipline and self-sacrifice?

- + Not as long as there's a single politician left alive to make a
- + speech, they won't. But they might acknowledge that some of it
- + exists in spite of that.

HARRY WARNER, JR. 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Md. 21740:

I never thought the day would come when you could publish fan-zines faster than I could write letters of comment on them. But three issues of g2 are on hand, and it's a good thing that you use the legal length paper, because that makes them easy to pull out of the decomposing mass of fannish publications that await attention. You should have received in May or June a couple of copies of Horizons, to prove that I still remember occasionally to mail out the non-FAPA copies of that, and another issue will appear in August, if some of the opinions expressed in it don't cause my mimeographer to rebel. ((+Don't want to send it out here and have me get Norm Metcalf to run it off, do you? I thought not.+) I'd better warn you that letters from me may not be any prompter for some months to come than they have been this summer. Mighty forces are at work at the office, making some sort of change in duties unavoidable for me, and

- + ...And, for cripe's sake, there you go publishing remarks you
- + think Eney might not like -- and that you know others won't like
- + if that's the case, and you'll get misquoted and misunderstood
- + and attacked and castigated just when you're unable to spend time
- + on any defense, and ... how many times is it you've done this,
- + now? I've even forgotten what the last incident was about.

Your April issue proves all over again that you know more about relativity than I do. But I am not altogether sure that you used an ideal method of showing why you couldn't get from Bigstar to Hotstar faster than light. You demonstrate the impossibility by explaining the optical illusion that would result. I feel that an optical illusion should not stand, unaided and alone, in the path of faster than light travel. Suppose that the Capitol Limited goes from Chicago to Washington at 60 miles per hour; am I to say that no passenger train could make the trip at a faster rate, because people aboard it would see the Capitol Limited appear to move backwards as they overtook the mile-per-minute train at a speed of 70 mph?

- + You most certainly should! To make your analogy complete, Harry,
- + you would have to say that though it's been tried, dozens of times
- + by people on other trains, nobody has ever seen your Capitol
- + Limited move backward! (In actual experiment, certain "Capitol
- + Limited" nuclear particles and sub-particles have been watched for
- + some time, now, for just such FTL effect of "moving backward" in
- + their interaction with other particles.) So suppose nobody had
- + ever seen a mile-a-minute train seem to move backward, huh? Be
- + awful funny, wouldn't it? But that's what we've got to.

The exploring series that you were trying to remember in that issue's letter column sounds like the Professor Jameson stories that Neil Jones wrote for the old pre-Palmer Amazing. The robots had names like automobile license plates and Sloane always seemed to give the Jameson stories the cover illustration despite the fact that these stories brought out the very worst in Morey. But at this moment, I am totally unable to remember any episode from one of the stories,

Despite the fairly clear notion I retain about the general framework and the appearance of the explorers. Maybe I'd better not try to re-read them, if they weren't strong enough to stick in the memory.

- + And there is absolutely no truth to any notion that I struggled through every blamed one of 'em from the very first one when ol' Prof Jamieson woke up inside that multi-eyed, multi-footed and multi-tentacled tin can. Somebody might think I oughta be in First Fandom, next thing you know.
- + But I've just been sitting here thinking that everyone who missed that issue with the Relativity article won't know that I showed how faster-than-light ships would be seen to move backward....

I have some doubts about your ability to find an all-weather, all-purpose Yngvi bug that would be as surefire a weapon as explosives. Unless, that is, you postulate a thorough casing of the planet first of all, to make sure about population density and biological construction of the inhabitants, and observe the effect of a small quantity of your bugs in a restricted area. You might also find it necessary to lug an awful lot of those tiny rocket missiles and propellant across the light years to accomplish this means of wiping out a population. There are lots of square miles on the surface of any planet and an awfully large proportion of the bugs would inevitably land in spots where they would not find conditions right for thriving.

- + It is an awful shame that nature does not possess your logic and foresight, Harry, as then Europe would never have experienced the bubonic plague.

Cite some instances of this "very active, sometimes violent hatred of the public" that those early fans experienced. When has the mob howled for blood when ---

- + Whup! Just a little minute there, fella; May issue, was it? Uh huh -- I see that my remark was, specifically, "Early fans had a very active, sometimes violent hatred of the public." So I did not say that they experienced any active or violent hatred of, or from, the public. Did a neat job of altering it, so it could be read with a different meaning, but I get that treatment enough in other fanzines. I'm certainly not obligated to permit anyone to pull it here. Pray continue.

--- it read about fannish ideals in articles on the hobby in newspapers and magazines? My personal experience with mundanes who learned I was a fan has been quite spectacular. The usual reaction is: well, that looks like an unusual hobby and I'll bet you learn a lot by it, but I would never have enough spare time to get into that myself. I certainly feel that there would have been at least a mild riot at a worldcon by now, if this gulf between fandom and the general public were as great as you describe, but conventions have been held in the same hotel with simultaneous legion, fraternity, religious, and all sorts of other conventions in quite peaceful coexistence except when these mundanes get so interested in the fans that they try to attend the wrong convention.

- + How many conventions is it you've attended, now? This has me wondering if you ever used to read other fanzines beside your own!
- + For ghod's sake -- back when practically all of fandom was snotty teenagers, when s-f pulp mags looked just like all other pulp mags and was labelled cheap trash, and kids got the hell whipped out of 'em if they were caught with one -- when fans knew the only similarity between s-f pulps and the other western, detective, love story trash was the sadistic/sex cover illo and tore it off as soon as they bought a magazine -- when the only ones you dared mention rockets or trips to Mars to was another fan, or you got told emphatically that you were crazy this never happened to you, there in Lagerstown, h'mmm? And you honestly feel that all other true fans must each live in his own little Lagerstown? You will not believe that early fans formed such a "tight, little island" because they simply could not talk to anyone else about the things that interested them? That none were ridiculed who tried it?
- + They were. Some told about it.

+ But what gives it that odd, jangley note is how you were there all
 + that time, too. How come you had it so good? Now run to your news-
 + paper publisher real quick and tell him to start running editorials
 + about how our National Economy must be Dedicated to Colonizing Mars
 + (even if we don't know how, yet), and not just merely having a few
 + guys walk around on the Moon, as this Will Have To Be Done anyhow
 + and we will save hundreds of billions of dollars if we Do It Now
 + and not wait around 'til the last minute. I'm sure he'll listen.

RICK BROOKS, R.R. #1, Fremont, Indiana 46737:

There is one thing you mentioned that I would like to have cleared up. I would like to know what the evidence against Breen is. I am 23 and have spent a hitch in the Air Force, so I'm no blushing violet. I hear a lot of yelling about Breen, but everybody is afraid to put down what they know. I do not want to get in this matter without sufficient evidence. All I seem to have so far are opinions. I would also like to know what the hell the remarks in Warhoon 20 on the slandering of Marion Bradley mean.

+ Rick, this one paragraph was the only part of your several LoCs I'm
 + publishing. Believe me, this one paragraph is more than enough,
 + because I could fill an entire issue of this fanzine giving you
 + the answers you want. The answers, mind you; not opinions.

+ So I won't write a 15-page article on what you'd need to learn be-
 + fore you could recognize any such evidence when you saw it. I'll
 + tell you one thing: you can find out about nuts who prefer sex with
 + children at your local police department. And I'll tell you one
 + more thing: you'll find out whether you're any "blushing violet"
 + if they show you any police-file photos of child-victims of such
 + nuts. Merely learning about their abnormal behavior pattern, tho,
 + will be enough.

+ Nor will I publish photostat copies of any of the evidence against
 + Breen. The evidence is simply that he has expressed in writing, in
 + fanzines and fan letters, a desire for children that has startling
 + overtones, such as hatred for parents who disapprove. If you con-
 + tact Buck Coulson in Wabash, you might see photostat copies of such
 + evidence -- he received some of it. He's also remained commendably
 + neutral (even stubbornly neutral, when required) so he won't want
 + to "persuade" you about anything.

+ The fannish rumormongering of "incidents" involving Breen, mostly
 + by his so-called "friends" who defend(?) him, caused the Pacificon
 + Committee to try settling the thing locally and quietly before the
 + convention. They failed. That's when we heard about it from them.
 + We learned everything they had been able to verify regarding those
 + "incidents" and we talked to the cops about it. This was last sum-
 + mer -- months before the much-lamented Boondoggle had even been
 + written. And the cops (some of whom are our personal friends) told
 + us what fandom was playing with. And we told the Pacificon Com-
 + mittee. They responded exactly the way most of fandom has since --
 + they dropped the whole thing like a hot potato! Go to the cops?
 + Good ghod!!! This was fandom....

+ But it wasn't fandom. Sure, Bill Donaho sent his Boondoggle out to
 + a number of fans, describing the "incidents" and asking what should
 + be done. Some of the answers he got included recommendations that
 + several other fans get it. He sent it. (And some of the fans who
 + were recommended got mad as hell at Bill for sending it.) But one
 + hell of a lot of fans didn't get it. And naturally, the two main
 + responses Bill got were letters advising them to hire a lawyer and
 + bar Breen from the convention, and published broadsides in fanzines
 + denouncing Bill for circulating the Boondoggle.

+ And sure, the Committee requested that Breen come in to defend him-
 + self, and Breen didn't -- his friends came in to denounce the Com-
 + mittee in every way they could think of or invent. We were there.
 + And Breen's friends were granted a little more time; but then,
 + nothing was heard from them, the Committee wasn't asked for another

+ meeting -- and Breen, Marion and friends showed up finally, at the
+ very last minute, ready to have a meeting when the Committee wasn't
+ even there. They didn't get one. Breen was expelled. But then
+ the Committee finally went to a lawyer.

+ And they found out it wasn't just "fandom" at last. The lawyer told
+ them what we had told them. Then they took this mess to the cops.
+ There were several possibilities. This could be a guy who expressed
+ an urge for children but hadn't and might never do anything. It
+ could be a guy who wanted approval of it, who hadn't done very much
+ -- yet. It could be a guy who'd already done plenty, who'd had a
+ damned good scare and quit, but now it was bugging him again. It
+ could be,....

+ It was simply enough to call for an investigation. There was one,
+ but what the cops found is their business. They did not find enough
+ to satisfy a district attorney that any charges could be brought
+ against Breen. Minor charges could be contested and cost everyone
+ involved a hell of a lot more than any conviction on minor charges
+ would be worth. Any guy who really has that urge is going to satis-
+ fy it. Let the guilty one convict himself -- they always do, even-
+ tually. The investigation had to be done so long as we didn't know
+ whether he was already guilty as hell.

I'd stopped considering this a "fannish matter" long ago; but you may think that was a personal opinion. So far as any repercussions it may have in fandom are concerned, I'm reminded on several points of the case of George Wetzel. This Wetzel came into fandom, writing to fanzines and promag lettercolumns a lot of filth about White Su-premacy and hatred for "dirty black n—" and made a sort of nuisance of himself. I complained, and so did others. It took a little time, but finally we had no more of Wetzel. And I don't recall that we ever thought of asking for proof that he'd stomped any negro to death.

+ Sometime later, I heard that FAFA was having itself a little prob-
+ lem of poison pen letters. Seems they'd let George Wetzel become
+ a member, or something, and were having a terrible to-do about it.
+ However, I wasn't terribly interested.

+ But considering how Breen's so-called friends have "defended" him;
+ he might have been better off if, like Wetzel, he didn't have any.
+ I can't tell you anything about Warhoon. I sort of implied what I
+ thought of Bergeron once, and he got so miffed he's refused to ever
+ send me another issue. I find the arrangement quite satisfactory.

oo - - - oo

This is C2 Volume 3, Number 12, for September, 1964 -- which means 36 issues (not counting one special issue) have been published in the past three years. It emanates monthly from Joe & Robbie Gibson, 5380 Sobrante Avenue, El Sobrante, California #94803. No back issues available -- not just yet. No trades, no free copies for LoCs, no nothing unless I feel like it. Sample copy free on request and possibly quite often without it. But the customary rates are low: Stateside - 3/25¢, 6/50¢ or 12 for \$1. Europe: 3 for 1/9, 6 for 3/6 or 12 for 7/-.

European agent: Colin Freeman, Ward 3, Scotton Banks Hospital, Ripley Road, Knaresborough, Yorks., England.

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DOMINO FOR TAFF ✓

NOISE (Cont'd from page 10); as is somewhat obvious in this 1st installment of the Con Report -- so I've got time to work up a few idea glimmerings into fullblown articles with artwork for future issues. In the meantime, much discussion of many topics will continue to be found in the lettercol -- which is never restricted to any primary interests at all.

Clay Hamlin's sent in some results on a bit of work he's done -- not in time for this issue, but for next month -- and we have a thing or two from others. But unlike the last couple of 528s, this month has the number of pages and the size of lettercol I like to have. The last few months, I had just enough time to spend on this nonsense -- meaning practically none -- that I should've felt justified in suspending publication entirely. But hell, that's happened before.

 Methinks congratulations are very much in order for Michael McQuown -- and our most heartfelt condolences to the young lady; let's hope it doesn't turn into something serious like pneumonia or chicken pox and she goes and gets married to some nice, dependable bank robber or embezzler without any such crazy ideas in his head.

Which reminds me, somehow or other, that I have dropped little hints here and there in past issues on things like "Fly-Ins" and Rockford and haven't raised a hair on anyone. Sometime I am gonna get to educating all you iggerunt groundlings and show you something you have been missing.

But then, there are things I have got doing about science-fiction and interstellar travel and star-drives in ships and men, besides where's the only good place to build a spaceport on Earth and future civilizations and the sex novel Heinlein didn't but should write. And ten thousand years ago and more Whoary Old War Stories.

The mere thought of it all appalls me! The actual truth of the matter is that I haven't one single idea what's going to be in this so-called fanzine, month after next. Furthermore, I feel quite happy about it.

Norm Metcalf says that maybe one thing I could put into it is a new typewriter and some attempt to do better sten-cil cutting. Ah, well. The last and only time this one's been so much as cleaned in years, Gene did it with Betty's bourbon.....



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